

Some information on sectarianism, clientelism (revolving-door lobbying), confessionalism, tribalism and clans as barriers to equity and international development

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2.4 - Program Area: Civil Society

Lebanese Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) have an important role to play in contributing to just and democratic governance in Lebanon. CSOs can advocate for good governance, rule of law, and greater democracy. USAID is helping CSOs in their efforts to strengthen democratic civic participation, support civil society initiatives and advocacy campaigns, and improve internal capacity of promising CSOs and key professional associations. This assistance will contribute to public debate on non-confessional, technical economic and social issues of importance to all Lebanese in their daily lives. Lebanon will benefit from greater opportunities for modern-oriented civil society activists to impact public life and decisions, to fight against sectarianism and clientelism, and to lobby for economic and legal reform and human rights.

Program Area Context: Total Funding Amount: \$1,318,487

Total Planned Funding for Program Element: \$1,318,487

2.4.1 - Program Element Name: Civic Participation

Overview:

Civic participation is important to Lebanon's civil society development, and comprises working with Lebanese civil society represented by NGOs, think-tanks, and professional associations to foster a public debate on non-confessional, technical economic and social issues of importance to all Lebanese in their daily lives. This will create greater opportunities for progressive, moderate civil society activists to impact public life and decisions, to fight against sectarianism and clientelism, and to lobby for economic reform and human rights.

Anti-corruption is a priority topic for USAID's program on civic participation. A small grants program (Transparency and Accountability Grants, TAG) mobilizes CSOs to take the initiative and play an active role in reform. These are short-term and focused on increased transparency, accountability and good governance in Lebanon. Another 34 projects will be launched in FY07 in diverse sectors such as citizen rights, government policies and procedures, legislative reform, advocacy campaigns, civic education, increased political participation, and internal capacity building of CSOs. Several initiatives will be public-private partnerships between CSOs and government entities to effect positive reform.

USAID, Operational Plan, Operation Unit Lebanon, Fiscal Year 2007, February 9, 2007

Corruption in Lebanon is widespread and permeates all levels of society, as reflected by the country's global and regional average performances scores in most governance areas. Political parties, public administration, the Parliament and the police are perceived as the most corrupt institutions of the country. Partly due to political instability, the country has not established the necessary integrity structures nor are there indications of a strong political will to fight corruption. Lebanon's **confessional power-sharing arrangements** fuels **patronage networks** and **clientelism**, which undermines further the country's governance system. Offshore hydrocarbon resources were recently discovered in Lebanon.

The exploitation of these reserves has not yet started. It is crucial for Lebanon to create the necessary safeguards to ensure transparent management and maximum social benefits. Transparency International, October 15, 2012. Overview of corruption and anti-corruption in Lebanon. <https://www.u4.no/publications/overview-of-corruption-and-anti-corruption-in-lebanon.pdf>

Confessionalism. "Posts in government and seats in the legislature are apportioned amongst different groups **according to the relative demographic composition** of those groups in a society, which is seen as a way of formally recognising the communal political rights of indigenous groups. Currently, the political system of Lebanon is modeled in such a way. Proponents of confessionalism cite it as an effective way to secure the peaceful co-existence of diverse religious and ethnic communities by empowering each according to its "weight" in the region. However, critics point out that such a system may actually deepen conflict between ethnic groups. They argue that whichever group holds the most political power may use government to favour itself at the expense of other groups, or even to oppress rival groups. Also, as demographics change, the positions and power held by a particular group may no longer appropriately reflect the size of that group." Wikipedia, http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Confessionalism_%28politics%29

Comments on tribalism from a Biblical scholar, Tom Bradford

Let me see if I can give you an illustration of those circumstances in David's day by using one in our time. Notice how in the Middle and Far East our modern militaries are forever stymied by these tribal armies who have little technology, use primitive strategies, and employ mostly basic armaments to fight with. And also notice how on the diplomatic side we see this constant frustration and bewilderment of our Ambassadors and government officials who, although trained at our elite universities like Harvard, Princeton and Berkeley, find themselves constantly out maneuvered by these primitive tribal leaders who seem to change loyalties at the drop of a hat. Everything is a moving target that can morph from friend to foe, and back to friend again with little more than the right words uttered and a customary bribe. Or just as problematic some sacred site is violated, or some cultural custom or family honor is stepped on (none of which we even knew mattered), and loyalties shift yet again. Westerners have little regard or respect and even less understanding for the centuries of history and long-standing blood feuds and immutable cultural traditions and vague family ties that are the driving force behind all of these decisions and actions. Thus, as our generals are discovering there are limits as to what pure force can achieve, and the outcome is never going to be well defined and neat as were World Wars I and II. Rather what we are witnessing is a never-ending process of jockeying for position that is part of the very fabric of tribal society, and until **tribalism** is replaced with something else nothing is going to change.

Thus, we are told that as the war dragged on the house of ***Sha'ul*** diminished and the house of David grew stronger. This is speaking of relative strength, an ebb and a flow, not a clear-cut victory or a permanent shift in power and control from one government to another. What this means is that the clans were positioning themselves to side with the eventual winner. They needed to be allied with the current strongman (Ishbosheth) but were ready to change over to the emerging one (David) in a heartbeat. From an earthly standpoint this so-called war between David and Ishbosheth was not a contest between ideals and philosophies or a way of life; this was about prosperity, security and status. And the weak and ineffectual Ishbosheth could not measure up to what the charismatic and highly regarded David had to offer.

2nd Samuel, Lesson 4, Chapter 3, from Seed of Abraham Ministries. <https://www.torahclass.com/old-testament-studies-tc/901-old-testament-studies-2nd-samuel/904-lesson-4-2nd-samuel-3?tmpl=component&format=pdf>

Sectarianism. “According to one definition, is **bigotry**, **discrimination** or **hatred** arising from attaching importance to perceived differences between subdivisions within a group, such as between different denominations of a religion or factions of a political movement.

The ideological underpinnings of attitudes and behaviors labeled as **sectarian** are extraordinarily varied. Members of a religious or political group may believe that their own salvation, or the success of their particular objectives, requires aggressively seeking converts from other groups; adherents of a given faction may believe that for the achievement of their own political or religious project their internal opponents must be purged.

Sometimes a group that is under economic or political pressure will kill or attack members of another group which it regards as responsible for its own decline. It may also more rigidly define the definition of "orthodox" belief within its particular group or organisation, and expel or excommunicate those who do not support this newfound clarified definition of political or religious 'orthodoxy.' In other cases, dissenters from this orthodoxy will secede from the orthodox organisation and proclaim themselves as practitioners of a reformed belief system, or holders of a perceived former orthodoxy. At other times, **sectarianism** may be the expression of a group's nationalistic or cultural ambitions, or exploited by demagogues.

The phrase "**sectarian** conflict" usually refers to violent conflict along religious or political lines such as the conflicts between Catholics and Protestants in Northern Ireland (class-divisions may play major roles as well). It may also refer to general philosophical, political disparity between different schools of thought such as that between Shia and Sunni Muslims. Non-sectarians espouse that free association and tolerance of different beliefs are the cornerstone to successful peaceful human interaction. They espouse political and religious pluralism.” Wikipedia, <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sectarianism>